Full of cool air

To cool down their condensers, water-cooled ice machines require a continuous stream of cold water that goes right down the drain. It's an unnecessary waste of water, when one moderately sized air-cooled ice machine uses hundreds of thousands of gallons less per year than the water-cooled variety. As the name implies, an air-cooled machine uses air to cool the condenser. Air-cooled ice machines use around 20 gallons of water per 100 pounds of ice made, compared with more than 160 gallons per 100 pounds on the part of water-cooled condensers.

Save $3,000-plus in one year

Extrapolating the findings of studies on water usage indicates that a Santa Barbara hotel or restaurant owner with an older moderately sized water-cooled ice machine could save almost $3,000 in water and sewer costs in just one year by switching to air cooled. In addition to water savings, Southern California Edison has estimated a monthly energy savings of $45 if the air cooled condenser is outdoors or in nonconditioned space. That means an approximately one-year payback period by going air-cooled. To see how much you could save, go to http://www.fishnick.com/saveenergy/tools/calculators/icemachinecalc.php. Use a figure of $7 in the tab that asks for water/sewer rates.

GET CASH BACK TO MAKE THE SWITCH: Edison offers a rebate toward the purchase of an energy efficient ice machine and it ranges from $50 to $500, depending on the model. Visit http://www.sce.com/ExpressEfficiency/food-service-equipment.htm) and click on the link to qualifying products.